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Silver anniversary visitors are named Ambassadors of Goodwill



Aruba Tourism Authority Ernest Giel had the great pleasure of awarding four couples and veteran visitor Vincent Allegro, the title of Ambassadors of Goodwill to Aruba on Tuesday morning, March 13. (see their story on pg 4)

Santorum earns stunning double win in Deep South



Republican presidential candidate Rick Santorum addresses supporters after winning both the Alabama and Mississippi primaries

BIRMINGHAM, Alabama (AFP) - Republican presidential hopeful Rick Santorum scored a startling double win Tuesday in the Deep South, boosting his claim to be the true conservative alternative to frontrunner Mitt Romney.

Santorum's dramatic come-from-behind victories in Alabama and Mississippi gave his bid for the nomination to take on President Barack Obama in November elections a huge shot in the

arm and were a stinging rebuke for Romney.

The results were also bad defeats for former House speaker and southern native Newt Gingrich, as the two states were seen as must-wins for his flagging campaign.

Santorum's sweep of Alabama and Mississippi highlighted how Romney, months into the race and despite more money and better organization, has failed to convince US voters he is the strongest

candidate to face Democrat Obama.

Santorum trumpeted his conservative credentials after the victories, in a pointed jibe at Romney, who has not won in the south and whom critics in the Republican Party label a moderate, liberal former governor of Massachusetts.

"We did it again!" Santorum, a devout Catholic and opponent of abortion and gay marriage, told ecstatic supporters in Lafayette, Louisiana, where he had traveled after campaigning heavily in Alabama and Mississippi.

"The time is now to make sure, to make sure that we have the best chance to win this election and the best chance to win this election is to nominate a conservative to go up against Barack Obama."

"We will compete everywhere," he said, as he ridiculed Romney's inability to win over voters in several states despite massively outspending his rivals on campaign advertising, much of it spent in negative attack-ads on his opponents.

Continue on pg 7

Enjoy authentic Aruban hospitality the Magical Madi way



Beyond the glamour of glittering resorts and internationally known franchises, Aruba has a character which is uniquely its own, and is the true foundation on which its tourism is built- its sincerely warm-hearted, hospitable people, and none embody that more than Madi Kock. (get more info on pg 2)

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200 NGOs press Russia after year of Syria violence

BEIRUT (AFP) - A coalition of 200 human rights watchdogs urged Russia to back UN action to end the bloodshed in Syria, in a joint statement issued on Thursday marking one year since the violence erupted.

"A coalition of 200 NGOs from 27 countries... is demanding that the UN Security Council immediately unite and pass a resolution calling on the Syrian government to stop indiscriminate shelling of civilian neighbourhoods and other violations of international law, stop arbitrary arrests and torture and grant urgent access to humanitarian workers, journalists and human rights monitors," the statement said.

The call for the international community to "Unite for Syria: Stop one year of bloodshed" was backed by activists across the world, as well as celebrities including British actor Stephen Fry and Canadian singer Nelly Furtado.

"For a full year, the death toll in Syria has escalated to the horrifying total of more than 8,000 dead, including hundreds of children. Isn't it time for the world to unite behind effective steps to stop this now?" said Ziad Abdel

Tawab of the Cairo Institute for Human Rights.

The Institute signed the statement along with the New York-based Human Rights Watch, Christian Aid, CIVICUS and the International Federation of Human Rights.

"Moscow and Beijing should stop providing diplomatic cover for Syrian atrocities, and start demanding an end to indiscriminate shelling and attacks on peaceful protesters," he said, quoted in the statement.

The NGOs called on the UN Security Council to demand the Syrian regime stop shelling protesters; urged the international community to back envoy Kofi Annan; demanded humanitarian access to areas in need of aid; and appealed for the "Friends of Syria" coalition to uphold its aid pledges.

"The Syrian people have survived with outstanding courage one year of systematic and widespread crimes and bloodshed as the world stood by and watched. The international community must unite and help Syrians bring an end to the horror," said Souher Belhassen, president of the International Federation for Human Rights.

Enjoy authentic Aruban hospitality the Magical Madi way

Beyond the glamour of glittering resorts and internationally known franchises, Aruba has a character which is uniquely its own, and is the true foundation on which its tourism is built- its sincerely warm-hearted, hospitable people, and none embody that more than Madi Kock.

Madi has been delighting tourists with her very personal tours for a number of years now, and it was her smiling face and that of her mother Dora which greeted so many when they approached the most popular entrance to one of Aruba's favorite sights, the Natural Pool. Several times a day, island visitors would try to approach the pool in vehicles that could not possibly navigate the rough, winding roads leading to it, and Madi would be there to take them down there in her safari-type truck, all the while imparting fascinating stories of island folklore and fun facts.

Ever optimistic, Madi sees the closing of the road as the "opening of another window of opportunity," and has moved her operation to a place much more accessible to visitors traversing Aruba's back roads. On Tuesday, she proudly opened Madi's Magical Way shop at Rooi Bosal, right next to the turn off for Frenchman's Pass, on the main Santa Cruz Road.

Aside from being able to arrange a tour with her, she stocks a number of items sometimes left behind, including her signature floppy hats to protect faces from Aruba's intense sun. Madi is a font of information about Aruba, which can be enjoyed for free while taking some refreshment or a lunch stop to enjoy some of Mama Dora's down-home cooking.



The Magical Little shop in Rooi Bosal



Anna checks out the inventory



Mama Dora

Madi's shop is open from dawn to dusk seven days a week, for browsing and visiting, with everyone welcome

to come and enjoy some authentic Aruban hospitality.

By Rosalie Klein



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Chartis cooperates with Idefre by sponsoring T-shirts for Half Marathon on Aruba



From L to R: Mr. Tico Luidens from IDEFRE and Mr. Prakash Gupta from Chartis Aruba

Chartis Aruba Insurance Company is very pleased to be sponsoring the T-shirts for 27th International sporting event of Aruba popularly called Idefre Half Marathon. This event is being held on Aruba Day.

Chartis Insurance has taken over the operations of American Home Assurance Company effective March 1, 2012 and established itself as a legal entity by name of Chartis Aruba Insurance Company N.V.

Chartis is the property-casualty and general insurance division of AIG serving more than 70 million clients with a turnover of USD 35 billions around the world. With one of the industry's most exten-

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AIG Group has existed in Aruba for over 71 years now and their latest act of setting up a local company shows the confidence, AIG & Chartis have in the economy and insuring public of Aruba.

Seen in the picture is Prakash Gupta, Managing Director of Chartis Aruba with Mr. Tico Luidens of Idefre and the T-shirts that will be proudly worn by the Marathon runners.



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Silver anniversary visitors are named Ambassadors of Goodwill at Cas Del Mar



Judy and Louis Lavalée



Maura and Jim Dolan



Cila and Bud McCue

Aruba Tourism Authority Ernest Giel had the great pleasure of awarding four couples and veteran visitor Vincent Allegro, the title of Ambassadors of Goodwill to Aruba on Tuesday morning, March 13. The group, of which three couples had purchased timesharing at the Casa Del Mar during their very first vacation on Aruba 25 years ago, all hale from Massachusetts, and after having explored the rest of the Caribbean since then, have come to the conclusion that "no place even comes close to beating Aruba."

Judy and Louis Lavalée, Maura and Jim Dolan, and Cila and Bud McCue, along with Vincent, appreciate the

changes they have seen since they first started coming to the island 25 years ago; "there are a lot more great restaurants and places to

with only 21 years vacationing annually on Aruba under their belt. Like the others they thoroughly enjoyed tooling around and exploring the

time, still do. Neal is a golfer, and he certainly appreciates the addition of the two world-class courses built here since he first started coming.

"THAT was an experience! I think I watched my ball bounce along about 10 times to add another 100 ft to my drive. When we went there for the first time, it was about 9:30 in the morning and some of the members invited us in for a cocktail. All we could think was, "these guys sure know how to live!"

CDM Activities Coordinator Xiomara Morris joined Ernest Giel in expressing the heartfelt gratitude of not only Aruba, but the staff of Casa Del Mar for the group's loyalty and enjoyable presence in the resort year after year. Each couple received a complementary bottle of wine from the management in appreciation.

By Rosalie Klein



Vincent Allegro



Neal and Midge Thompson

shop, it just keeps getting better and better."

Midge and Neal Thompson are the "newcomers,"

island, and taking their friend who they introduce to Aruba to some of the interesting natural sites, and after all this

"I remember the first time I and friends went to play golf at the Aruba Golf Club in San Nicolas," Neal recalls,

US math equation gauges celebrity marriages

NEW YORK (AFP) - Prince William and Kate Middleton will stay married, but don't necessarily bet on Tom Cruise and Katie Holmes managing the same thing -- not according to an updated celebrity marriage formula.

Created in 2006 by scientist Garth Sudem, the Sundem/Tierney Unified Celebrity Theory is surprisingly accurate, the New York Times reported Tuesday.

The equation takes into account the "relative fame of the husband and wife, their ages, the length of their courtship, their marital history, and the sex-symbol factor (determined by looking at the woman's first five Google hits and counting how many show her in skimpy attire, or no attire)," the Times says.

It correctly predicted the break-up of Demi Moore and Ashton Kutcher, Pamela Anderson and Kid Rock, and Britney Spears and Kevin Federline.

Next on the doomed list, the Times says, are Will Smith and Jada Pinkett. Although they're still married, tabloid reports are filled with rumors of a split ahead of their December 15th anniversary.

Garth has refined his methods and says that he now studies not so much the amount of fame involved so much as the type of fame, measuring not just Google hits, but mentions in the New York Times versus those in the supermarket tabloid National Enquirer.

"It's tabloid fame that dooms you," he says.

And it's the wife's fame that matters most: "A high NYT/ENQ ratio also explains why Chelsea Clinton and Kate Middleton have better chances than the Kardashians."

The full study -- and the formula particulars -- can be seen at: <http://www.nytimes.com/imagepages/2012/03/13/science/13tier-graphic.html?ref=science>

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Don't miss the Carubbian Festival in San Nicolas tonight!

SAN NICOLAS -- Every Thursday evening, islanders flock to San Nicolas to enjoy the fabulous bargains and entertainment of the Carubbian Festival, a mix of Aruban and Caribbean traditions kept alive by the multi-cultural make up of Aruba's "Sunrise City."

Originally populated by the thousands that came from all over the Caribbean to work at

the refinery, the town has savored and preserved the food, music and dance that many brought with them from their various regions. The festival revels in the diverse background of San Nicolas, offering unique dishes and beverages, along with a full evening of island entertainment.

This Thursday the Festival will be dedicated to Arub's



Flag and Anthem Day which is celebrated annually on March 18th.

Scattered throughout the main street of San Nicolas are performance areas surround by seating where you can settle in with an island snack or dinner, including steelpan music.

Island visitors can enjoy the Carubbian festival as part of a complete package available at

all De Palm and concierge desks, which include transportation. You can customize your evening by purchasing with or without food and refreshments.

A variety of local handicrafts are offered for sale and the event guarantees a good time for all, with an authentic introduction to the island experience.

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TUESDAY AND FRIDAY: LIVE MUSIC

International News

Suspect in killings moved out of Afghanistan: Pentagon

WASHINGTON (AFP) - A US soldier accused of massacring 16 civilians in Afghanistan has been transferred out of the country, a Pentagon spokesman said Wednesday, without saying where he was taken.

"He has been flown outside of the country, based on legal recommendation," said US Navy Captain John Kirby, arguing that the US military did not have a suitable detention facility in Afghanistan to hold him.

The move came amid a tug-of-war over where the suspect should be tried, with the Afghan parliament demanding a public trial before the Afghan people and the Pentagon insist-

ing he be prosecuted under the US military justice system.

The suspect, a 38-year-old army sergeant, is alleged to have left his base in southern Kandahar province before dawn Sunday and then proceeded to kill 16 people, many of them children, in two neighboring villages.

He then returned to his base and surrendered. US army investigators have video images of him as he turned himself in, a US source in Afghanistan told AFP.

Nothing has been disclosed about his motivation or mental state three days after the incident, which has plunged US-Afghan relations to a new low

and raised broader questions about the US strategy there.

The soldier, who has not been identified, has not been charged as yet, although Defense Secretary Leon Panetta has said he could be sentenced to death if found guilty.

Asked whether the soldier's transfer out of Afghanistan meant that he would not be tried there, Kirby said it was "too soon to talk about specific judicial" matters.

Another Pentagon spokesman, George Little, said on Monday, however, that under US-Afghan agreements the US military would prosecute any US soldiers accused of committing crimes.

Dissidents occupy Havana church ahead of Pope visit

HAVANA (AFP) - Thirteen political dissidents occupied a Catholic church in Havana demanding that Pope Benedict XVI press for political freedom in Cuba, religious and dissident sources said Wednesday.

The protesters, five women and eight men, are members of the outlawed opposition Republican Party of Cuba (PRC), group member Julio Beltran told AFP.

The group entered the Our Lady of Charity church in central Havana late Tuesday and spent the night at the church.

Protester demands include unconditional freedom for political prisoners, an end to repression and persecution of regime opponents, access to uncensored news, freedom of travel, and an inflation-adjusted raise in retiree benefits, according to the PRC website.

Roberto Betancourt, a priest at the church, said he received a letter from the protesters, who promised to leave once they received a response from senior church clerics.

On Wednesday, church members lined up for baptisms and other activities without noticing the police presence.

After decades of official atheism, the Cuban regime now has more cordial relations with the Catholic and other churches. Most Cubans however do not consider themselves practicing Catholics.

The pope is scheduled to fly to Santiago de Cuba on March 26, 14 years after Pope John Paul II's historic visit in January 1998, following a visit to Mexico, and celebrate mass in the same town square where John Paul II celebrated services. President Raul Castro will welcome him to the island.

The pope will then make a private visit to El Cobre, near Santiago. This year marks the 400th anniversary of Our Lady of Charity, a statue of Mary found in the sea off of El Cobre and Cuba's patron saint.

Benedict will then fly to Havana, where Cardinal Jaime Ortega will greet him. The pope is to again meet the president, and may meet his brother, longtime Cuban leader Fidel Castro.

The pope is scheduled to wrap up the visit on March 28 with a mass in Havana's Jose Marti Revolution Square.

Newspaper claims to publish private Assad emails

LONDON (AFP) - A British newspaper on Wednesday published emails it claims were sent by Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad and his wife, allegedly revealing the regime sought advice from Iran on suppressing protests.

The Guardian newspaper admits it "is impossible rule out the possibility of fakes" in the cache of over 3,000 emails, which appear also to reveal the lavish lifestyle enjoyed by the leader and his wife, Asma.

The newspaper stressed it had made "extensive" efforts to authenticate the emails which it says were intercepted from the couple's private accounts and passed on by a source in the Syrian opposition.

The messages, published on the paper's website, appear to show that Assad received advice from Iran or its proxies several times during the uprising against his regime, which began exactly a year ago.

Assad's media consultant told the president he had "consultations with a good number of people in addition to the media and political adviser for the Iranian ambassador" while preparing a speech in December.

The note urged the president to use "powerful and violent" language, to show appreciation for support from "friendly states" and to "leak more information related to our military capability" in order to deter protesters.

Another message from Khaled al-Ahmed, who is thought to be Assad's adviser on Homs and Idlib, pushed the president to "tighten the security grip to start (the) operation to restore state control and authority in Idlib and Hama countryside".

He also warned Assad that European reporters had "entered the area by crossing the Lebanese borders illegally".

Asma al-Assad was also apparently told by the Qatar emir's daughter, Mayassa al-Thani, that her husband should resign.

Other messages believed to have been sent to and from the accounts document the couple's opulent lifestyle.

One exchange between the couple appears to show the president's wife spending thousands of dollars on candlesticks, tables and chandeliers via the Internet while another reveals the leader's eclectic taste in music.

The Guardian contacted 10 people whose messages appear in the cache to confirm their authenticity, but admitted it had not been possible to verify every one.

Activists said a mole within the president's inner circle provided them with a password for the account with the username am@alshahba which is believed to belong to the ruler.



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International News

28 die in school trip coach crash in Switzerland

SION (AFP) - Distraught relatives flew in from Belgium Wednesday after 22 children and six adults died in a school bus crash in a Swiss Alpine tunnel. Twenty-four of the 52 people on the coach were injured.

They had been returning to Belgium from a skiing holiday when the coach slammed into a concrete wall late Tuesday in a motorway tunnel near the town of Sierre.

The reason for the crash is still unknown.

The coach had only just reached the motorway after a short descent along winding roads from the mountain ski resort, close to the Italian border.

Marianne Van Malderen, a Belgian motorist who arrived at the scene shortly after the crash, described children

pinned under their seats or thrown towards the front of the coach.

"I've been doing this job for 20 years. But this was worse than anything you can imagine," said Alain Rittiner, in charge of rescue operations who arrived at the scene some 20 minutes after the crash.

The shouting from the injured children was "awful", he said, adding that it took two hours to get all those injured out.

Twenty-two of those hurt have so far been identified, local police commander Christian Varone told a press conference.

Those killed -- from Belgium and the Netherlands -- included 22 children from two Catholic primary schools, along with four teachers and both coach drivers.

A Swiss prosecutor said Wednesday the coach was not believed to have been speeding at the time.

The children were wearing seat belts, but "the impact of the accident was so great" that some were thrown clear along with the seats, he added.

Those hurt, three of whom were said to be in a coma, were taken by ambulance and helicopter to four hospitals after fire crews had worked for hours to cut them free from the coach's twisted wreckage.

Belgium announced a day of national mourning, while the Swiss parliament observed a minute's silence for the victims.

Belgian Prime Minister Elio Di Rupo and Swiss President Eveline Widmer-Schlumpf visited the site of the crash.

Police in the southern Valais canton told reporters early Wednesday that the tragedy was "unprecedented" and that even seasoned rescuers had been traumatised.

The injuries were so bad that the death toll could well rise, he added.

The coach, in a convoy of three hired by Catholic education authorities in Belgium's Flanders region, carried pupils from primary schools in Lommel, near the Dutch border, and Heverlee, in the suburbs of Leuven.

"We are all thinking like parents, with this terrible thought for those parents who will not see their children coming back today," Transport Minister Melchior Wathelet told RTBF radio. "Terribly hurt, terribly moved."

Belgian transport company Toptours operated the 2002-registered coach and had an "excellent reputation", said Wathelet.

Santorum earns

continued from page 1

With 99 percent of precincts reporting, Santorum, a former US senator, was ahead in Alabama with 35 percent of the vote, with Gingrich and Romney tied for second place on 29 percent, according to CNN figures.

In neighboring Mississippi the race came down to the wire, with Santorum on 33 percent, Gingrich at 31 and Romney at 30, with 99 percent of votes counted.

Libertarian congressman Ron Paul of Texas finished a distant fourth in both states.

Hours after the double defeat Romney however, secured consolation wins in the island state of Hawaii -- Obama's birthplace -- and in American Samoa, according to media reports.

With 82 percent of precincts reporting on Hawaii, Romney had 45 percent of the votes ahead of Santorum on 25 percent, according to results posted on the Republican Party of Hawaii website.

Romney had earlier issued a statement congratulating Santorum on his double victory, but insisted he remained best placed to win the nomination.

"I am pleased that we will be increasing our delegate count in a very substantial way after tonight," said Romney, who has about 40 percent of the 1,144 needed to become the party's presidential nominee. "With the delegates won tonight, we are even closer to the nomination," he added.

But experts said Santorum's win showed that he might yet

prevail in the race to be the White House nominee.

"Rick Santorum's twin wins in Alabama and Mississippi make him the clear alternative to Mitt Romney," Charles Franklin, co-founder of pollster.com and a professor at Marquette University Law School, told AFP.

"The weak showing continues to highlight the vulnerability of the Romney campaign, especially among the socially conservative Republican base," he added.

Tuesday's results also leave Gingrich with big problems. He has only two wins out of the dozens of contests held so far.

"Gingrich's failure to win either Southern state weakens his rationale for remaining in the race," Franklin said.

Gingrich, who faces calls to quit and allow conservatives to coalesce around Santorum, congratulated his rival on a "great" double win but said he would fight all the way to the Republican convention in Tampa, Florida in August.

He also insisted that the narrative of Romney as the inevitable nominee "just collapsed."

But Santorum's camp suggested Gingrich losses in his southern back yard would mean he'd be forced to drop out of the race.

"After tonight, it will be a two man race, Rick and Mitt, and we will clear the field and Rick has a good shot down the road," Santorum spokeswoman Allison Stewart told CNN earlier.

Small tsunami hits Japan after 6.9 quake

TOKYO (AFP) - A small tsunami hit Japan's northeastern coastline on Wednesday, officials said, after a strong earthquake rocked the region almost exactly a year on from the country's worst post-war natural disaster.

A 6.9-magnitude quake struck 26.6 kilometres (16 miles) below the seabed off the northern island of Hokkaido in the Pacific at 6:08 pm local time (0908 GMT), the US Geological Survey said.

It was followed by a 20 centimetre (eight inch) tsunami which had prompted local authorities to issue an evacuation warning for coastal residents before it hit land.

The waves hit several locations in Hokkaido as well as Aomori prefecture, which was

one of the areas in Japan's northeast devastated by last year's disaster.

The Japanese meteorological agency had initially said a tsunami could be as high as 50 centimetres, but US monitors said there was no Pacific-wide tsunami threat.

The initial quake was followed by several powerful aftershocks in the same vicinity, including one with a magnitude of 6.1, but there was no tsunami warning.

Almost three hours after the first quake, a 5.7-magnitude shock struck 90 kilometres east of Tokyo, USGS said. Japanese officials said there was no fear of a tsunami "although sea levels may change slightly in a few hours".



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Health & Living

Vaginal birth after C-section carries more risks: study

WASHINGTON (AFP) - Women who had a Cesarean section for their first child's birth face more health risks if they attempt a vaginal birth with their second, Australian researchers said Tuesday.

The study included more than 2,300 women at 14 hospitals in Australia who were preparing for their second child. About half signed up for a vaginal birth after C-section, or VBAC, and the other half chose to repeat the surgery.

Women who planned a repeat C-section had a significantly lower rate of complications than women who chose to deliver vaginally the second time -- 2.4 percent risk of death or serious complication compared to 0.9 percent in the surgery group.

Similarly, the risk of complications to the mother, such as major bleeding or hemorrhage, was 2.3 percent for women who delivered vaginally compared to 0.8 percent for a planned repeat C-section.

The study, published in open-access journal PLoS ONE, aimed to compare women who were eligible to try either option and assess the risks of each.

"Until now there has been a lack of high-quality evidence comparing the benefits and harms of the two planned modes of birth after previous Cesarean," said lead author Caroline Crowther from the Australian Research Centre for the Health of Women and Babies, part of the University of Adelaide.

"The information from this study will help women, clinicians and policy makers to develop health advice and make decisions about care for women who have had a previous Cesarean."

Cesarean births are on the rise worldwide, and they account for nearly a third of all births in Australia. Most second time mothers, some 83 percent, in Australia opt for a repeat C-section the second time around.

Among women in the study who wanted to try a vaginal birth, only 57 percent were able to proceed with it while the rest ended up having C-sections for medical reasons.

While both options presented relatively low risks for women in Australia, the research is likely to convince more women to avoid an attempt at a vaginal birth after C-section, wrote Catherine Spong of the US National Institutes of Child Health and Human Development.

"Mothers are unlikely to choose to await labor regardless of the counseling or the risk to the mother," she said in an accompanying editorial.

"In the end, the onus falls on the clinicians," added Spong, who was not involved in the research.

"Neither the patient nor the clinician would have to fret about whether to attempt a trial of labor or choose a repeat Cesarean if the first Cesarean had been prevented."

Egyptians design 'faster, cheaper' hepatitis C test

CAIRO (AFP) - The American University in Cairo said Wednesday that a team of its researchers has designed a faster and cheaper test for all types of hepatitis C, which it says affects about 10 million Egyptians.

The development "reduces the two-step testing process carried out over a number of days to a one-step process that takes less than an hour... at a fraction of the cost of traditional diagnostic protocols," the university said.

The liquid chemistry test can diagnose hepatitis C using gold nanoparticles, it said.

"Our test is sensitive and inexpensive, and it does not need sophisticated equipment," said Hassan Azzazy, professor of chemistry and head of the research team.

"Detecting HCV during the first six months raises the recovery rate to 90 percent. Little is done on the national level to combat the alarming prevalence of hepatitis C in Egypt," said Azzazy.

The AUC said Egypt has

about 10 million people who suffer from the hepatitis C virus (HCV), with the blood-borne pathogen infecting almost 500,000 in the country each year.

Worldwide, around 170 million people are estimated to be living with the chronic disease caused by the virus.

Unlike hepatitis A or B, most people infected with HCV cannot shake off the virus on their own because, when under attack by the immune system, it morphs into stronger variants.

The World Health Organisation estimates that three to four million people are newly infected with HCV each year.

The WHO says Egypt has one of the highest rates of hepatitis C prevalence in the world, putting the rate of infection in the country at 22 percent.

Contamination can occur through blood transfusions, blood products and organ transplants, and the virus can also be passed on to a child if the mother is infected.

Paseo Herencia celebrates Aruba's national Anthem and Flag Day on March 16

NOORD -- On Friday, March 16, Paseo Herencia will be completely transformed into a cultural center

Presenting on the stage of Plaza Padu is Grupo di Betico. Also the unveiling of the mural with our National Anthem in Papiamentu with the English translation next to it, so our visitors can understand the meaning of the words.

With this event Paseo

Herencia joins Aruba in celebrating our National Day.

"We invite locals and visitors alike to join us on Plaza Padu Friday at 7 p.m. and together we will make it a big happening. Our shopping bazaar will be open to roam around. So come everyone and have a nice time shopping, eating and enjoying our Aruban culture," a Paseo Herencia spokesperson invites.

Sci-Tech

Pope's Cuban croc named environment ambassador



ROME (AFP) - A rare Cuban crocodile was named ambassador for the environment at Rome's zoo on Wednesday, days before the sharp-toothed creature and Pope Benedict XVI travel to Cuba.

In a colourful ceremony in front of children waving Cuban, Italian and Vatican flags, the head of Rome's Bio Park zoo, Paolo Giuntarelli, said the 60 centimetre (two foot) croc was also the ambassador "of peace and solidarity".

The "crocodylus rhombifer" was captured by an Italian during a trip to Cuba and smuggled into Italy inside a sock hidden in a suitcase in 2011, but was confiscated by officials and ended up finding sanctuary at the zoo.

The two-year-old reptile will be returned to his home in Cuba as a symbolic gesture "to show that man should stop devastating nature", Giuntarelli said.

In January, the small crocodile travelled to the Vatican to meet a bemused pope, who places particular importance on supporting and defending nature.

The Cuban crocodile is on the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) endangered species list: its population has dropped by 80 percent and it only survives on a small area of the island.

Benedict XVI will depart for a trip to Mexico and Cuba on March 26, and the crocodile will set off for Cuba on the day the pontiff's journey begins.

"I hope that the crocodile has a good journey," said Giovanni Becciu, former Vatican diplomatic representative to Cuba, who attended the ceremony.

"I'm sure the people of such a magical and enchanted island will give as warm a welcome to the crocodile as they will to the pope, he said.

CELEBRATING ARUBA'S FLAG AND ANTHEM DAY

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Australia to become hotter, drier: climate report

SYDNEY (AFP) - Australia's climate is warming at an alarming rate and is set to become drier despite recent record floods, scientists said Wednesday in a report that warns of increased drought and fiercer storms.

The country has seen annual average daily temperatures rise by 0.9 degrees Celsius since 1911, with each decade since the 1950s warmer than the last, the report by government science body CSIRO and the Bureau of Meteorology said.

The national climate snapshot found that temperatures will jump again -- by between 1.0 and 5.0 degrees Celsius by 2070 -- if global greenhouse emissions remain within the range of expectations.

"Global changes of this magnitude happen very rarely. They happen when asteroids strike, they happen when

there's planetary volcanic activity," said Karl Braganza, the head of climate monitoring at the Bureau of Meteorology.

"They're happening now because we're digging up fossil fuels and basically burning them all. And we're doing that very, very rapidly," he told ABC Radio.

Australia is known for its droughts, cyclones, bushfires and floods and the State of the Climate 2012 found that while a spike in the frequency of droughts was expected in the south, there was also likely to be an increase in the intensity of rainfall events -- such as the Queensland floods.

Eastern Australia faced huge floods in late 2010 and early 2011, which swamped an area as large as France and Germany combined, destroying farms and coal mines and claiming more than 30 lives.

The inundations were caused by La Nina events, which brought the highest two-year average rainfall total on record in 2010 and 2011 -- and Australia's coolest years since 2001.

But the report said they did not alter the overall picture of warming.

"The warming trends observed around Australia are consistent with global-scale warming that has been measured during recent decades," it said.

The report said average temperatures in Australia are projected to rise by 0.6-1.5 degrees Celsius by 2030 when compared with the climate of 1980 to 1999.

It added it was clear that increasing greenhouse gas concentrations -- which reached a new high in 2011 -- would result in "significant further global warming".

COMICS

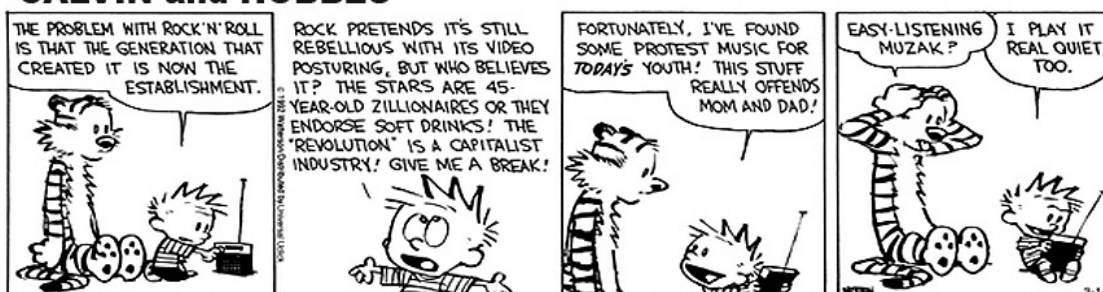
PICKLES



MOMMA



CALVIN and HOBBS



CROSSWORD



CROSSWORD

ACROSS

1. Rascal
4. Sandwich inits.
7. License-testing place (abbr.)
10. Gone by
11. Untrusting
13. Width of Shaq's shoes
14. Ask humbly
15. Good-bye (Fr.)
16. Compass pt.
17. Golf norm
19. Monkey's cousin
21. Mob member
25. Promissory
26. Fa's follower
27. Kelly of morning TV
31. And so on (abbr.)
32. ___ Paulo
33. Partner of improved
34. Like sore muscles
36. Seer's gift (abbr.)
37. Motorcyclist Knievel
38. Atlantic Seaboard resident
41. Turn over
44. Mule's cousin
45. Warsaw's country

(abbr.)

46. Ursa ___
50. Check
53. Last-yr. students
54. Window blind
55. Mineral source
56. Favorable vote
57. Veneration
58. "___ and Stimpny"

DOWN

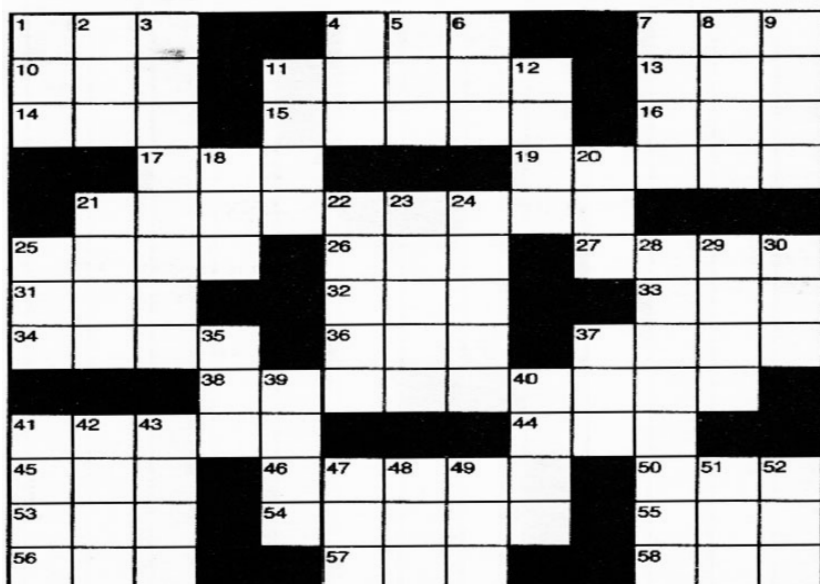
1. Taxi
2. Ripen
3. Li'l Abner's hometown
4. Where the

sandman visits

5. Honolulu wreath
6. Three, in Pisa
7. Consider
8. List of choices
9. Swerve
11. Merry adventure
12. ___ log
18. King topper
20. Figure wrongly
21. Univ. military group
22. Pluralizing letters
23. Cinnamon ___
24. Marry secretly
25. Teachers' gp.
28. Backer, as of a production
29. ___ group
30. Pointy tool
35. Strong desire
37. Naval off.
39. Naval bosses (abbr.)
40. Steak order
41. ___-daisy
42. Small opening
43. Movie lioness
47. "By Jove!"
48. Uppercut recipient
49. Lyric verse
51. "___ you kidding me?"
52. Dr. Casey

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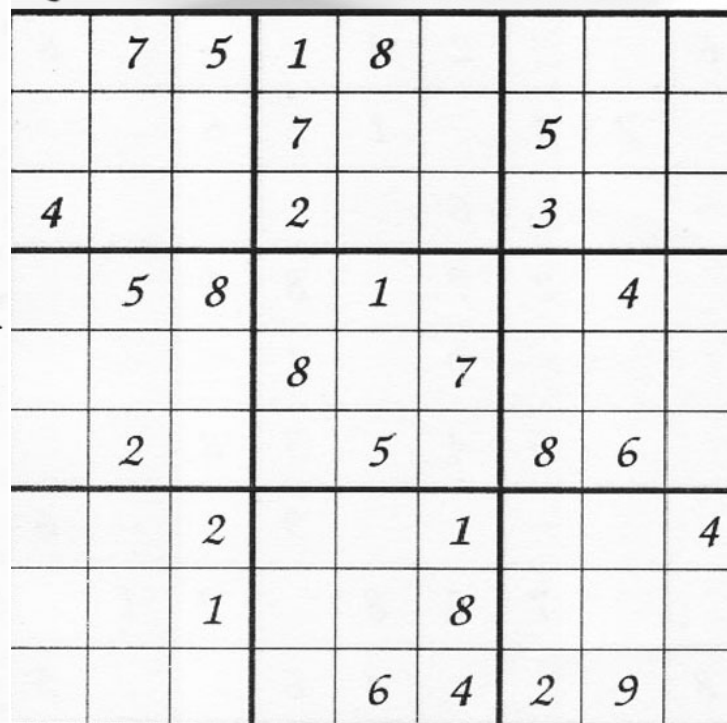
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Sudoku



SOLUTION

1	6	2	4	9	5	7	8	3
5	8	9	1	7	6	3	4	2
4	8	9	1	7	6	3	4	2
2	5	1	7	6	3	4	2	9
8	7	6	2	1	9	8	5	3
3	4	5	6	2	9	1	7	8
9	1	5	8	4	7	6	3	2
6	2	4	9	8	1	5	7	3

Complete the grid so that every row and every column contains the numbers 1 through 9

A number is Never repeated in a row or column.

In addition every rectangle must contain the numbers 1 through 9

Daily Exchange Rates				
Current as of: 03/06/2012				
	Currency Code	Buying rate banknotes	Buying Cheques	Selling Rate
U.S.A.	USD	1.77	1.78	1.80
Dutch Antilles	ANG	98.00	100.00	100.20
Canada	CAD	1.78	1.80	1.82
Britain	GBP	2.73	2.78	2.84
Switzerland	CHF	191.95	192.67	193.47
Netherlands	EUR	230.54	232.64	234.98
Sweden	SEK	25.20	25.92	26.72
Denmark	DKK	30.33	31.05	31.85
Norway	NOK	29.86	30.58	31.38
Japan	JPY	211.19	213.12	215.26
(per 10,000)				
All rates for amounts up to AWG 100,000				

Finance

US senators press for Ex-Im Bank reauthorization

WASHINGTON (AFP) - US senators introduced a measure Wednesday that would extend authorization of the Export-Import Bank for another four years and boost its lending cap from \$100 billion to \$140 billion.

While the charter of the Ex-Im Bank is set to expire at the end of May, it is predicted to hit its lending ceiling in just two weeks.

Senate Democrats have accused conservative Republicans in the House of Representatives of seeking to delay or block reauthorization of the bank, which provides favorable financing to overseas buyers of US goods, in turn helping US companies compete globally.

Renewing the charter would provide the bank with \$140 billion in new lending capacity through 2015.

Democratic Senator Maria Cantwell said this would be "a huge boost to businesses," particularly in her northwestern state of Washington, where she said one in four jobs is trade-related.

Cantwell and fellow Democrat Charles Schumer attached the amendment to a jobs bill that eases regulations on small companies.

The so-called IPO bill, which would allow small firms to more easily raise capital and launch initial public offerings, sailed through the House with overwhelming bipartisan support last week, and Senate leaders have agreed to vote on the House version.

Schumer noted that President Barack Obama has made a priority of doubling US exports within five years.

Ex-Im Bank helped generate over \$40 billion in US exports in 2011 alone, and helped create or sustain 290,000 US jobs at a time of persistently high unemployment, Schumer said.

Oil prices drop

LONDON (AFP) - Oil prices fell on Wednesday, pressured by a stronger dollar, a rise in US crude oil stockpiles and Saudi Arabian assurances that it would replace market shortfalls caused by pressure on Iran.

New York's main contract, West Texas Intermediate for delivery in April, lost \$1.28 to close at \$105.43 a barrel.

Brent North Sea crude for April shed \$1.25 to \$124.97 in London trade.

A rise in US crude inventories and a fall in US refinery throughput gave a bearish spin to the market.

With unseasonably warm weather continuing across much of the country, the US Department of Energy said in its weekly report that total products supplied to the market over the past four weeks were down 5.4 percent from a year ago.

The IEA meanwhile kept its forecast of demand growth for this year stable at 89.9 million barrels a day

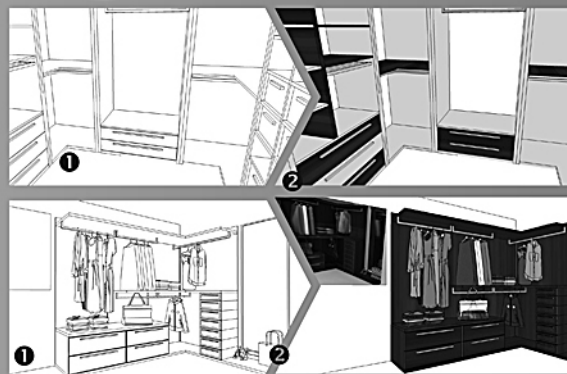
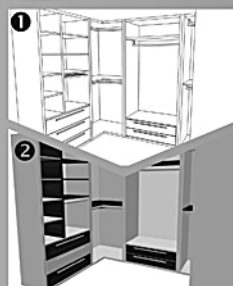
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Iran slams using oil as 'political tool'

KUWAIT CITY (AFP) - Iran condemned on Wednesday what it said was the use of oil as a political tool against producers, referring to Western sanctions over Tehran's nuclear programme, as Saudi Arabia promised to cover any shortage in supplies.

At the 13th biennial International Energy Forum, which concluded in Kuwait on Wednesday, Iranian Oil Minister Rostam Qasemi indirectly denounced the West for ramping up sanctions against the Islamic republic over its nuclear programme.

Qasemi's comments came as the International Energy Agency forecast that Iranian oil exports will fall by 800,000 barrels per day after mid-2012.

But Britain's minister of state for energy and climate change, Charles Hendry, said the West was not using crude as a weapon, insisting sanctions were imposed due to the Iran's "intolerable threat," and aim for an "appropriate" response from Tehran.

Without mentioning the sanctions, Saudi Arabia's Naimi said: "As I have noted many times before, Saudi Arabia and others remain poised to make good any shortfalls -- perceived or real -- in crude oil supplies.

The IEF meeting ended without addressing market fears over escalating tension between the West and Iran, with ministers agreeing that markets needed transparency to tackle volatility.

The United States and the European Union have in the past four months ramped up economic sanctions on Iran in a bid to force it to suspend uranium enrichment, the most sensitive part of its nuclear programme.

Tehran warned in December that it would blockade the strategic Strait of Hormuz -- a key transit route for global oil supply -- if the West imposes further punitive measures.

China, India, Japan and South Korea import two-thirds of Iran's oil exports, with the EU accounting for only around a fifth.

Meanwhile, Iran's chief nuclear negotiator Saeed Jalili sent a letter to EU foreign affairs chief Catherine Ashton saying he wanted to see "representatives from both sides in contact to set a date and place for the new round of talks," the official IRNA news agency reported.

Ashton represents the so-called P5+1 group of world powers, comprising the United States, Russia, China, France, Britain and Germany.

The last round of talks between Iran and the P5+1 broke down in Istanbul in January 2011.



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"Together we will learn"

YESTERDAY'S Crossword Answer

ERG	SOHO	ICES
TAR	ARES	NOTA
TIE	VEIL	FLAG
ANGLE	RODEO	
	PSI	ERROR
YAMS	FIRE	SALE
EVA	ESSES	DEN
TOILS	SOME	ROOT
INDIA	LEE	
	ELUDE	AGREE
MINI	IGOR	IMP
IDLE	NOUN	PTE
SAYS	SSTS	ATE

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IT GOT "HAUTE" AT THE ARUBA MARRIOTT

Top Model and DJ Ivy hosted and event at the new H2Oasis Pool



Get_Haute_At_H2Oasis, Lisa D'Amato with guests



Great ambiance at the Get Haute event at Aruba Marriott



Get_Haute_At_The_H2Oasis pool event with DJ Ivy and Lisa D'Amato

PALM BEACH – This past Saturday evening, the Aruba Marriott hosted a pool event entitled "Get Haute at the H2Oasis," for the official season opening of their new H2Oasis adults-only pool. The highlight of the event was the appearance of television personality and "America's Next Top Model All Stars" winner

Lisa D'Amato who was accompanied by international female deejay, DJ Ivy from Los Angeles.

Guests at the H2Oasis party enjoyed themselves while dancing to the top 40's tunes DJ Ivy was playing. DJ Ivy is famous for her skills on the turn tables, and is one of the best female DJs in the US. She



Lisa D'Amato's swimsuit shoot at the Aruba Marriott Resort

rocked the H2Oasis.

"We had great guest comments about our H2Oasis adult pool," says Keirsin Tjon, PR & Ecommerce Manager of the Aruba Marriott. Our "Get Haute" event allowed our guests to experience the H2Oasis in an evening setting and as something other than just a pool."

For All Star winner top model Lisa D'Amato, it has been a while to enjoy some vacation time with her fiancé. "It is my first time in Aruba and my last, I am not leaving this beautiful island", says D'Amato smiling.

Aruba Marriott Resort & Stellaris Casino boasts 411 guestrooms each with private balconies overlooking cascading waterfalls, a

free form swimming pool and tranquil Caribbean waters. Guest exclusivity is attainable on the eighth floor through the Tradewinds Club, a boutique, 'hotel-within-a-hotel' concept that is paired perfectly with the new adults-only pool and lounge area. On property dining options range from light to elegant with seven restaurants and cafes, while entertainment and relaxation can be achieved in the island's largest casino, or in the 6,500 square-foot spa. To obtain more information call the Aruba Marriott Resort & Stellaris Casino at 1.800.228.9290 or visit www.arubamarriott.com or www.tradewindsclubaruba.com. Connect with the Aruba Marriott's official Facebook fan page by visiting www.facebook.com/ArubaMarriott and follow on Twitter @ArubaMarriott.



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Regional gourmet dining is highly affordable at Scabeche



Fresh Grouper in Scabeche Sauce

THE MORNING NEWS taste-testing team had a very, very pleasant surprise when stopping by the newly

met eatery, Chez Mathilde, but has now realized her long-time dream of welcoming and befriending patrons



Frutti di Mare Creole in Casserole

rechristened Scabeche, located in the Caribbean Palm Villas Resort. Veteran visitors will be pleased to become

in her own charming venue. Anky has completely remodeled the lovely space within the resort, which is



Steak Tika

reacquainted with Anky, who they will recognise from her years with Aruba's top gour-

just a short walk from the Palm Beach resort area, to create a delightful ambiance

and menu reflecting her great enthusiasm for fine food and quality service. Open for breakfast, lunch and dinner, after only one year they are receiving rave reviews under the original name, Caribbean Palm Restaurant. Sca-beche is homage to the unique regional cooking which is their specialty, native to Peru and other Latin countries, but with a distinctly Caribbean flavor.

We absolutely must rave about their signature dish, Catch of the Day Escabeche, moist and fresh; we had grouper in a singular sauce that has us ready to go back ASAP for another helping. We also sampled the Shrimp and Scallops appetizer and the Ceviche Aruban Style, as well as the Fruitti di Mare en Casserole, and recommend each of them highly. Scabeche is heaven for seafood lovers, but landlubbers will also be extremely pleased with the Tenderloin Tika, a HUGE steak skewer with loads of fresh vegetables.

Aside from their extremely pleasing and affordable regular menu, each night features some distinctive specialty. Monday is Carnival, with a show, Tuesday is Italian night, including a free Caesar salad, Wednesday is All You Can Eat BBQ Ribs for only \$19.95 and Thursday is Karaoke Party night with famed island entertainer Lloyd Baptiste, which features 2 for 1 drinks with free snacks from 8 to 10 p.m.

Scabeche is a welcome addition to the Palm Beach roster of restaurants and definitely deserves discovering. Diners will love the tranquil setting, excellent and friendly service, along with a very reasonably priced menu featuring several distinctive and delectable dishes.

Closed on Fridays, they also feature 2 for 1 Happy Hours 3 times a day from noon to 1 p.m., 3 to 5 p.m. and 9 to 10 p.m., tempting you to linger over a liqueur after your dinner.



Enjoy an enchanting vacation at Sasaki Apartments



Sasaki Apartments is a pleasant complex of 24 studio apartments, conveniently located in the residential area of Bubali in northern Aruba. Just 400 meters (0.31 miles) from the famous Eagle Beach, which you can walk to in about 8 minutes. Downtown, casinos, shops, supermarkets and restaurants are just minutes away by car, for your convenience.

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phere characterizes the apartment complex, with an invitation to enjoy a relaxing atmosphere in its different areas: in the pool under the Caribbean sun, on the terrace reading a book, preparing a good barbecue by the pool, or in your apartment with total privacy.

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Office hours are Monday to Friday 9:00 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.; Saturday 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. On Sunday only for check-in and check-out.

SPORTS

Golf: England's Rose, Donald among PGA favorites



file photo- Justin Rose

PALM HARBOR (AFP) - World No. 2 Luke Donald and English compatriot Justin Rose, coming off a victory last week at Doral, will play together when the US PGA Transitions Championship begins today.

South Korean K.J. Choi, a two-time winner at the \$5.5 million event, joins the feature group in one of the final tune-ups for the first major championship of the year, next month's Masters at Augusta National Golf Club.

Donald shared sixth in 2010 in his only prior appearance in the event and shared sixth last

week in the World Golf Championships event at Doral as well.

Nothing would top the season for the reigning money champion on the US and European tours than to collect his first major title at Augusta National.

Rose is coming off his fourth US victory in the past 22 months and has finished in the top 25 in each of his past five starts at Innisbrook.

Defending champion Gary Woodland, last year's runner-up Webb Simpson and Scott Stallings, third in 2011, are also paired together for the first and second rounds.

The field features 17 major winners, including reigning Masters champion Charl Schwartzel of South Africa and three-time major winners Ernie Els of South Africa, Padraig Harrington of Ireland and Vijay Singh of Fiji.

Japanese prodigy Ryo Ishikawa is joined by Bud Cauley and US debutante Tom Lewis, the Englishman who had four birdies in a row at last

year's British Open to become the first amateur to lead that event in 43 years, in a 21-and-under trio.

Rose can feel his game coming together as the Masters looms, giving him a chance at his first major title.

"Everything is in order," Rose said. "Maybe not everything shows up on the same day, and when it does, that's the day you go low."

Much was predicted for Rose at a young age but he sees himself as ready to play his best golf between his 30th and 40th birthdays.

"It has just been a matter of finally putting into practice all of the things I've learned, establishing a good team around me, getting to a point in my life where I'm comfortable on and off the golf course," Rose said. "It's a lot of factors that go into playing well. It's not always just about the golf swing or how you're putting. It's putting your life together along with the golf. That's probably what has happened in the last two years."

Football: Premier League sorry for FIFA, UEFA 'theft' row

DOHA (AFP) - Outspoken Premier League chief Sir Dave Richards launched a blistering attack on governing bodies FIFA and UEFA on Wednesday, accusing them of "stealing" football from the English.

"England gave the world football," Richards, speaking at the International Sport Security Conference in the Qatari capital, was quoted by the BBC as saying.

"We wrote the rules, designed the pitches and everything else. Then 50 years later, some guy came along and said you're liars and they stole it. It was called FIFA."

"Fifty years later, another

gang came along called UEFA and stole a bit more."

But hours later he apologised for his remarks, which he said had intended to be "light-hearted".

England are still angry over the doomed multi-million-dollar bid to stage the 2018 World Cup, which was awarded to Russia, and Richards suggested that his own country's contribution to the game has been neglected.

The Football Association distanced themselves from Richards' remarks.

Richards had also taken advantage of his platform in Doha to criticise organisers of the 2022 World Cup in Qatar

for their hardline stance on alcohol.

He even hinted that fans of many European teams could stay at home rather than travel to the Gulf, where summer temperatures nudge the thirsty, high-40s Celsius mark.

Currently in Qatar, alcohol can only be purchased in hotel bars and restaurants, while expatriates have to obtain a licence to buy drinks.

Boxing: Title fight off for unbeaten Rios, Gamboa

NEW YORK (AFP) - Unbeaten former world champions Brandon Rios and Yuriorkis Gamboa will not fight for the vacant World Boxing Association (WBA) lightweight title on April 14 as planned.

Telecasters HBO have dropped the bout from their schedule, according to their boxing website. It was scheduled for Las Vegas, Nevada.

Gamboa, who won Olympic gold for Cuba in 2004 in Athens before de-

fecting, is 21-0 with 16 knockouts, while Rios is 29-0 with one draw and 22 knockouts.


Gamboa, who skipped news conferences last week aimed at promoting the bout, would have jumped two weight classes to fight for the crown after giving up his WBA and International Boxing Federation featherweight titles a year ago for missing a weigh-in before stopping Mexico's Jorge Solis.

Rios vacated the WBA

lightweight title by failing to make weight for a fight last November against Britain's John Murray, whom he stopped in the 11th round to keep the title unclaimed.

The lone blemish on Rios' record was a 2008 draw with US compatriot Manuel Perez.

Since then, Rios has won 11 fights in a row, 10 by knockout and the other by disqualification. Gamboa has stopped foes in eight of 11 prior bouts.

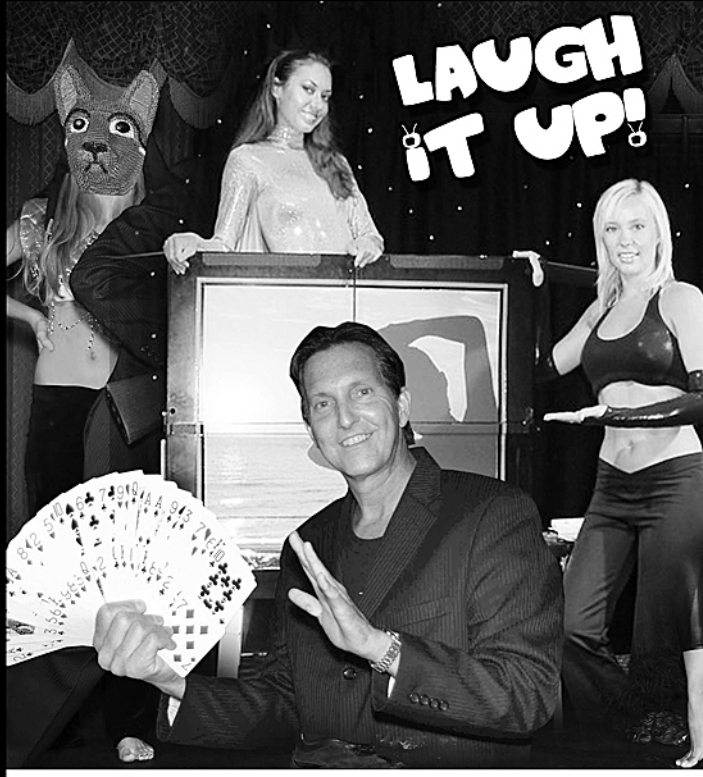


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NBA: Howard powers Magic over Miami in possible farewell



Dwight Howard #12 of the Orlando Magic is guarded by Chris Bosh #1 of the Miami Heat

ORLANDO (AFP) - Dwight Howard, the major subject of transfer talk as the NBA trade deadline nears, scored 24 points and grabbed 25 rebounds to lead the Orlando Magic over Miami 104-98 in over-time on Tuesday.

Jameer Nelson added 25 points, including two layups late in over-time, while J.J. Redick scored 17 points and Ryan Anderson had 16 points and 12 rebounds as Orlando won for the second time in three games with Miami this season.

"We're a great team when we play together and play hard," Howard said. "We did

that tonight and we have to do that every night. I'm happy we're playing like this. We just have to keep this going."

Dwyane Wade scored 28 points to lead Miami while Chris Bosh added 23 points for the Heat and LeBron James added 19 points, 11 rebounds and eight assists.

The Heat will have a chance to avenge the loss at home on Sunday against the Magic but by then Howard -- who enjoyed his eighth 20-point, 20-rebound night of the season -- might be playing elsewhere.

Howard has made no secret that he wants to play for a contender and would like to see Orlando make some moves to strengthen the lineup to compete with powerhouse clubs

like Miami and Chicago.

But the All-Star center has been linked in various reports to a handful of clubs and remains with the Magic, who can offer him the most money in a new contract and assemble talent around him as well.

With today's NBA trade deadline nearing, Howard's performance could have been his last with the Magic, but he said his only plans for the next days were "just play basketball and have fun" instead of ponder trade distractions.

Miami led 56-45 at half-time, thanks in part to 11 points by Wade in the first quarter and a 29-15 Heat edge in the second quarter. But the Magic battled back and pulled level at 94-94 to force over-time.

Howard outfought James for a rebound to set up a Nelson layup with 1:34 to play and, after an offensive foul on Miami's Mario Chalmers for charging into Anderson, Nelson made an underhand scoop layup off the backboard while evading a Bosh block attempt to give Orlando a 102-96 lead with 55 seconds to play.

Wade made a layup to pull the Heat closer and Howard missed four free throws that allowed Miami to remain within striking distance, but James missed two 3-point shots and Wade missed another and Redick sank two final free throws to secure the victory.

NBA: Bucks deal Bogut to Warriors

SAN FRANCISCO (AFP) - Australian center Andrew Bogut was traded from the Milwaukee Bucks to the Golden State Warriors as part of a five-player deal, the NBA clubs confirmed on Wednesday.

The Bucks sent the injury-hit big man and guard Stephen Jackson to Golden State in exchange for Monta Ellis, Ekpe Udoh and Kwame Brown, which sets up an emotional matchup on Friday when the Bucks visit Golden State.

Bogut, the top choice of the

2005 NBA Draft by the Bucks, played in only 12 games this season before breaking his left ankle on January 25 at Houston.

The 27-year-old 7-footer has also been hampered by surgery on his right hand and elbow in 2010 and another operation on his right elbow last April. The Aussie big man has averaged 12.7 points and 9.3 rebounds over his NBA career.

Ellis has two years and \$22 million remaining on his contract. He has career averages of 19.6 points and 4.4 assists a game.

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Tennis: Djokovic needs three sets to make quarter-finals



INDIAN WELLS (AFP) - Top seed Novak Djokovic defeated Pablo Andujar 6-0, 6-7 (5/7) 6-2 on Wednesday as the top three men in the world took a stab at trying to reach the Indian Wells quarter-finals.

The 24-year-old Serb came into Wednesday's fourth round match with a 12-1 record on the year, having already captured the fifth Grand Slam title of his career at the Australian Open.

"In the end I was lucky to get through some points," said Djokovic, who has won the last three Grand Slams. "I am happy to go through to the next round."

The 96-player men's draw started out with 47 of the top 50 ranked players in the world, including all of top 10.

It is still an impressive field with the quarter-finals on the horizon as number one Djokovic, world No. 2 Rafael Nadal and No. 3 Roger Federer are all in action Wednesday the

Indian Wells Tennis Garden.

Djokovic advances to the quarter-finals, where he will face Nicolas Almagro, who surprised seventh seeded Tomas Berdych 6-4, 6-0.

Djokovic looked to be charging his way into the quarter-finals after taking the first set 6-0 in just 28 minutes.

But he quickly found himself in the middle of a dogfight in the second as unseeded Andujar started to get his serve cracking, taking the set in a tie-breaker to level at one each.

Djokovic fired four aces and saved eight of eight break-point chances in the two hour, 16 minute match.

"It is a fourth round match," Djokovic said. "My opponent is really a quality player. He deserves to be at this stage of the tournament."

Spaniard Andujar, who upset No. 18 seed Florian Mayer to en route to the fourth round, finished with one ace and four double faults.

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Boxing: Brawling Chisora's licence withdrawn

LONDON (AFP) - Dereck Chisora has had his licence withdrawn "indefinitely" by the British Boxing Board of Control (BBoC) following his controversial behaviour in Germany last month.

Chisora, a 28-year-old Zimbabwe-born Londoner, was involved in several unsavoury incidents both before and after his WBC heavyweight title points defeat by Vitali Klitschko in Munich on February 18.

He slapped Klitschko at the pre-fight weigh-in, spat water in his brother Wladimir's face during the introductions, and then brawled with British rival David Haye at the press conference afterwards.

Chisora spent a night in the custody of German police after the clash with Haye and, following a hearing in Cardiff on Wednesday, promoter Frank Warren said the board had withdrawn his licence to box indefinitely.

There were also no immediate details of what fine, if any, the BBoC had imposed upon him.

Smith added that while the board cannot punish Haye because he is officially retired, they would take his role in the brawl into account should the former heavyweight champion re-apply for a licence.

Chisora, speaking to The Independent newspaper, said before the hearing that he was anticipating a ban.

"If they ban me, I'm not going to be sulking around the house," he said. "I'll still be training because I'm a fighter and I love fighting."

Chisora's mother was rushed to hospital following his dust-up with Haye and her son said "Believe me, I'm more afraid of my mother than any opponent in the ring."

NBA: D'Antoni resigns as Knicks coach - reports

NEW YORK (AFP) - Mike D'Antoni has resigned as coach of the New York Knicks, according to several reports Wednesday, saying assistant coach Mike Woodson will take over the team immediately.

The Knicks are 18-24 and level with Milwaukee for the eighth and final playoff spot in the Eastern Conference with 24 games remaining in the season, but have struggled in recent weeks, losing six games in a row.

D'Antoni went 121-167 with the Knicks since taking over in 2008 after five seasons guiding the Phoenix Suns. He coached Phoenix into the playoffs four times but only nudged the Knicks into the post-season once during his tenure.

The move comes on the eve of the NBA trade deadline and after the Bucks made a five-player deal with Golden State to improve their chances in the final weeks of the season.

Since the return of Carmelo Anthony from an injury, the Knicks have struggled to find the same rhythm and have fallen seven games behind Atlantic division leader Philadelphia.

Anthony spoke after a team workout on Wednesday before the news broke about D'Antoni, denying reports he wanted a trade and saying he was not trying to push out D'Antoni, calling such talk "a bunch of nonsense."

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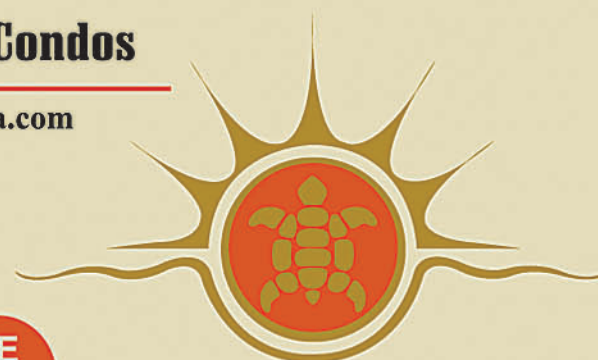
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